

18th Century British History (Abridged): (1700-1799)

Timeline:

- 1702 – William III dies; Queen Anne’s reign begins
- 1707 – Great Britain is formed with England and Scotland’s union
- 1714 – The first Georgian king ascends the throne—George I
- 1720 – wallpaper becomes fashionable
- 1727 – George II becomes king
- 1741 – Handel composes *Messiah*
- 1756 – The Seven Years’ War begins
- 1760 – George III begins reign
- 1765 – Parliament passes the Stamp Act
- 1769 – James Watt patents the steam engine

Political and Economic Developments:

- The Glorious Revolution put limitations on the monarchy which much later led to real democracy
- The Act of Union of 1707 politically joined England and Scotland as Great Britain.
- Two political parties: Whigs (who support the British nobility) and the Tories (who support the growing merchant class) form alliances and control Parliament
- During George I’s reign, the king’s cabinet of advisers were chosen from Parliament, the greatest or “prime” minister of the time was Robert Walpole, a Whig
- Seven Years’ War (1756-1763) with France
- Industrial Revolution – a gradual process of change from “cottage industries” to factory manufacturing
- The Industrial Revolution eventually, along with the Seven Years’ War, and irregular taxation led to George III becoming a tyrant in American history books

Life and Times:

- The human mind could achieve anything was the prevailing philosophical thought
- A fascination with ancient Greece and Rome arose
- A hierarchy arose in society in the following order: nobility, then the landed gentry, then the merchants and professionals (like doctors and lawyers), then the majority—the poor
- Life was pleasant for the not poor
- Both sexes wore wigs or powdered their hair until a 1790s hair powder tax led to “natural” hairdos
- Scientific and technological advances occur: Watt’s steam engine, Hargreaves’ spinning jenny (1770), vaccinations, the “coach” becomes a means of travel

Literature:

- Satire becomes a popular form of prose and poetic writing
- Daniel Defoe writes *Robinson Crusoe*, one of the first true novels
- Jonathan Swift—*Gulliver's Travels*
- Samuel Johnson writes the first *Dictionary of the English Language*
- William Blake—*Songs of Innocence*
- James Boswell—*The Life of Samuel Johnson*
- Alexander Pope writes "The Rape of the Lock"
- First major literary magazines begin—*The Tatler* and *The Spectator*
- The gothic novel, the picaresque novel, the novel of sentiment, and the novel of manners are introduced